

ISLAM

True prayer fends off evil

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

A believer has been advised in the Quran to be steadfast in his prayer, for prayer fends away indecency and evil. (29:45). When the Prophet of Islam was asked about this verse, he said: "If a person's prayer does not fend away indecency and evil, then his prayer is not really prayer at all."

Prayer is to remember the fact that one is living before a God who--though man cannot see Him--can see man. Whoever leaves the mosque with this fact firmly embedded in his mind, cannot live forgetful of God. In prayer one testifies to the fact that God is the greatest of all beings.

If one is truthful in one's testimony, one will not claim greatness for oneself when one has finished praying. Whatever one recites in prayer is a covenant before God that one will keep his commandments; then how is it possible that one should leave the mosque and treat people with arrogance and contumacy?

The actions of prayer are a manifestation of the fact that one's heart is full of fear and love for God. How can one claim to be full of fear and love for God in the mosque, and then live as if one knows neither fear or love for Him when one goes outside? If one's prayer is devoid of spirit, it will be no more than a perfunctory action which has no connection with one's real life. It will be prayer in form, but not in reality.

It is as if one were to say: a son who stays lying down while he sees his father standing does not respect his father; a brother who sees his sister hungry and does not give her something to eat is not really a brother at all; the friendship of a person who hears of his friend's death and does not stop laughing is not really friendship at all.